643 again or even have him executed for no reason at all. Most of the
554 influential figures and high dignitaries at the courts of the khans make many changes in the course of their careers as a result of this and moreover even the khans themselves are not always immune. The former envoy of Kokand, Mirza Hakim, who for the betrayal of his fatherland and his Khan later received the title of a Russian state councillor, had earlier been a shopkeeper. The Khan of Khiva, Kulman, was promoted to this position as a result of a conspiracy of day laborers. The former ruler of Kashgar, Yakub Beg, rose from the dregs of the population, having been in his youth a 'batsha', or 'public dancer.' The last Khan of Kokand, Khudoyar, after his first dethronement in Dzhizak, established himself as a shopkeeper, and acquired such a fancy for business that he continued with it after he regained the throne, and declared a large part of the booths of the bazaar of Kokand to be his property. Indeed he did not consider it beneath his dignity to keep bands of musicians, as well as leaders of bears and monkeys, which he ordered led about the fairs on his account, and had them give concerts in private houses, uninvited.

565 Since the post of honor of the father, the bestowal of which unfortunately depended upon the whim of the ruler, was only rarely passed on to his son, the children of high-placed officials often enjoyed no more education than the children of ordinary townsmen and ran around with them barefoot and half-naked in the streets. During my stay of several weeks in Baysun in 1886, where I was the guest of the beg or governor there, the sons of the beg came to my court every day to consume the leftovers of my dinner in the company of my servants and cossacks. To see a former beg or court official or his sons working as dealers in old clothes, carters or even day laborers is not at all unusual.

643 One can see from the following case how uncertain and in-
558 constant the favor of a khan is. During my first trip to Bukhara, a Bukharan who ranked as the best chess-player was staying with the former Emir of Bukhara, Muzafar al-Din, a chess-player who was as passionate a player as he was mediocre. The chess-player was held in great esteem and was overwhelmed by the Emir with /176/ honors and riches. Upon a later visit I met this favorite in a group of ragged vagabonds who were pushing their way into our quarter with the hope of obtaining some of the tidbits from our table which are usually found when guests are being entertained. When I inquired

as to the circumstances of his having fallen so low, he told me the following. The Emir was once playing chess in his presence with one of his begs, and at a critical point, after long reflection, he made a decisive move and then turned, self-satisfied to the favorite to ask if he thought the play a good one. The latter answered truthfully that he could consider the move only as an unlucky one, and the result immediately showed that he had not been deceived, for the Emir lost the game after only two more moves. The Emir was so exasperated by the frankness of his chess adviser as well as at the loss of the game that he dismissed the man then and there, and confiscated all his property. Since naturally all the others turned their backs on the Emir's abandoned favorite, whose favor they had courted until that time, there was nothing left for the unlucky chess master but to beg for his bread. 643 558

The willfulness with which the Central Asian khans have always treated all their subjects, without regard to person, is only somewhat mitigated by their constant fear of revolts and assassination. The last Khan of Kokand, Khudoyar, was driven from the land by his subjects three times. The grandfather of the present Emir of Bukhara, Nasr Allah, who was finally also done away with by his favorite wife, lived in constant fear of death after he himself had murdered all his brothers, and he had recourse to extensive precautionary measures to ensure himself against poisoners. His drinking water had to be brought directly from the Zerafshan and inspected and sealed by two court officials and each time it had to be tasted first by the Kushbegi and his servants before the Emir himself decided to drink it. The food intended for the Emir was prepared not in his own harem but in the harem of these same officials and under their inspection. Of the finished dishes the Kushbegi and his followers always ate first, and only if there were no signs of poisoning among them after the passage of an hour, the food would be sent over to the Emir in a closed, sealed chest. The same procedure was followed with the fruit brought to the table of the Emir. Nasr Allah trusted his own sons so little that he always forced them to leave the capital whenever he changed his residence to Samarkand for the summer, so that they might not bring about some sort of revolt in his absence. 643 [669]

/177/ As for political organization in the Central Asian khanates, it is distinguished by extensive decentralization. Government officials, whose sphere of activity extends over the entire state, on the whole do not exist. The khan rules directly only that town in which he resides; here he collects taxes, appoints the administrative officials 631